

Minutes of the meeting of the **Partnership Sub-Committee** held on Thursday
19 April 2001 when there were present:

Cllr R S Allen – Chairman

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr Mrs J Hall

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr K Bobbin (Essex County Council), Cllr G Fox (Rochford District), Cllr Mrs E M Hart (Essex County Council), Cllr G A Mockford (Rochford District Council)

SUBSTITUTE

Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson.

REPRESENTING TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS

Mrs H Allen	(Barling Magna Parish)
P Beckers	(Rayleigh Town)
Mrs M Beckers	(Rawreth Parish)
Mrs L Campbell-Daly	(Hullbridge Parish)
D Collins	(Hockley Parish)
A Dobson	(Sutton Parish)
M Drayton-Thomas	(Ashingdon Parish)
M J Ewers	(Rochford Parish)
Mrs M Morgan	(Hawkwell Parish)
J Morgan	(Hawkwell Parish)
Mrs S Murton	(Rawreth Parish)
Mrs P M V Pearse	(Rayleigh Town)
Mrs J Rigby	(Clerk, Stambridge Parish)
I Rooke	(Hawkwell Parish)
Mrs J Smith	(Canewdon Parish)
B Summerfield	(Sutton Parish & Barling Parish)
Mrs M S Vince	(Rochford Parish)
Mrs L Vingoe	(Hockley Parish)
P Woodford	(Canewdon Parish)

Officers Attending

A Hudson Assistant Chief Executive, Essex County Council

A Smith

Head of Administrative and Member Services, Rochford
District Council

108 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2001 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute No. 105 – Our Countryside: The Future

Following concern expressed at the content of the County Council's response to the introduction of further rural speed limits in Rochford (circulated separately after the last meeting of the Sub-Committee), it was agreed that speed limits and road safety should be included as a topic for discussion at the Sub-Committee's next meeting.

109 YOUTH NUISANCE/VANDALISM

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from Inspector Bill Coady and Acting Inspector Kevin Diable-White of Essex Police on youth nuisance and vandalism in the District.

Members were informed that (excluding Rayleigh), the number of reported incidents of youth nuisance in the District in the 12 months to February 2001 was 359. As with all crime and reported incidents, the Police regularly monitored incidence in order to target resources at areas and times of greatest risk. However, it was important to recognise that in comparison with other parts of Essex, the level of crime in Rochford was very low.

The Rayleigh Division had in recent months had a number of unfilled posts that had reduced the level of Policing locally but this was now being addressed. In particular, from 2 July 2001, there would be an expansion of the Rayleigh Crime Unit, which would enable greater numbers of emergency calls to be handled locally.

During discussion, reference was made to the number of domestic and farm burglaries in the Ashingdon and Canewdon areas. Whilst clearly upsetting for the victims, the Police nevertheless felt the level of incidence was still relatively low. However, it was accepted that not all crime is reported to the Police and therefore the statistics produced may result in an understatement of the true level of crime within the District.

It was recognised that a frequent source of complaint to the Police was the gathering of young people in public areas within the District. Although the Police do respond to such complaints, in the majority of cases there is no nuisance being caused. The Police do not have

powers to move young people on, unless they are actually committing an offence. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the Police needed to be more proactive in dealing with the issue. The Sub-Committee was therefore pleased to learn that a number of initiatives were already taking place within the District to deal with the problem as well as with public perception of gatherings of young people. Many of these initiatives were being undertaken in conjunction with the County, District and Town and Parish Councils and demonstrated the value of the community itself taking action to provide facilities for young people.

On behalf of the Sub-Committee, the Chairman expressed his thanks to the Inspectors Coady and Diable-White for their attendance at the meeting.

110 REVIEW OF DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Administrative and Member Services on the final recommendations of the Local Government Commission for changes to the District Council's electoral arrangements.

The Sub-Committee noted that the District Council was now minded to accept the Commission's recommendations but had requested that this Sub-Committee consider further the issue of when consequential changes to parish electoral arrangements should be implemented. The District Council had previously recommended to the Local Government Commission that all changes to parish electoral arrangements should be introduced at the first ordinary elections of Town and Parish Councils in or after May 2002. The Commission had not however dealt with this matter in its final recommendations and therefore it was likely that all changes would be implemented from May 2002.

The Sub-Committee noted that for those parishes with ordinary elections in 2003 and 2004, elections in May 2002 would be in addition to those ordinary elections. Mindful of the cost implications of holding two elections within two years, Town and Parish Council representatives were also concerned at the effect that two elections held in relatively quick succession would have on turnout. It was therefore felt important that the District Council should make representations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions for the introduction of changes to coincide with the date of ordinary elections.

RECOMMENDED

That the District Council make representations to the Secretary of State for the date of implementation of consequential changes to parish electoral arrangements to be deferred to the first ordinary elections of each Council in or after May 2002. (HAMS)

**111 MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT – REVIEW OF THE
DISTRICT COUNCIL’S DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services which provided an update on the District Council’s review of its political decision making structure.

The Sub-Committee noted that since the report had been prepared, responses from members of the public and interested parties were also showing around 70% support for the introduction of a streamlined committee system. The District Council would be considering the results of public consultation at an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 30 May 2001. Following that meeting, the Council would then be consulting on the detailed arrangements for any new structure including the future involvement of Town and Parish Councils in the decision making process.

112 A MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services which contained a suggested response to the Government’s consultation draft of a model code of conduct for Members. It was noted that this response was also being recommended for approval by the full District Council at its meeting on 24 April 2001.

Whilst broadly supporting the Officer suggested response, the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the District Council include in its response:

Question 5 – Further guidance should be provided for those parish councillors that serve on the District Council, particularly in respect of how such councillors should deal with consultations on planning applications when these are considered by the Parish Council.

Question 8 – Further guidance should be provided on the definition of “friendship” as parish councillors will inevitably count many local people as friends. As presently drafted, the Code could require frequent declarations of interest thereby preventing councillors from contributing to the decisions of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chairman _____

Date_____